

THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. A group permissions system that minimizes the knowledge needed by a group administrator of other users and allows for new members previously outside the system, implemented using email and the World Wide Web with a sign up system involving a special URL which contains a group sign up cookie which is passed in the web browser through the log in or sign up to add the permissions for the group to that user.
2. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the URL is customized to pertain to only one user.
3. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the URL is customized to invite a recipient into multiple groups simultaneously.
4. A system as claimed in claim 1 where the URL expires after a specified time period.
5. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the URL is tracked such that it can be used only once.
6. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the non-member user can browse the controlled resource without joining as a user.
7. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the URL leads an unregistered site user to a registration screen where only the originally target e-mail address can be used for registration purposes.
8. A photosharing community where users share albums with groups of friends or associates through invitations which do not require invited members to use unique passwords on each shared album.

9. A photosharing wide area computer network comprising a web server storing digital images associated with particular users and allowing each particular user to authorize others to access the digital images of the particular user, said web server providing each user with an invitation procedure for inviting others to access the images controlled by the user, said invitation procedure including creating an invitation which includes an authorization segment and forwarding the invitation electronically to a designated invitee at a particular address, said designated invitee using said invitation to contact the web server and provide access to said images controlled by the user in accordance with said authorization segment.

10. A photosharing wide area computer network as claimed in claim 9 wherein invitees access said web server using a computer and the internet.

11. A photosharing wide area network as claimed in claim 9 wherein upon contact with the web server any recorded user has a listing of photo albums and said photo albums include personal photo albums and photo albums which the user and received authorization to share.

12. A method of providing controlled access to a common resource to be shared by a plurality of users where said common resource is available on a Web server available on the world wide web, said method comprising  
recording a group sign up authorization cookie associated with said common resource with said Web server,  
creating a customized URL which contains said group sign up authorization cookie,  
providing said customized URL to a new user,  
using a Web browser and said customized URL to initiate access to said common resource provide on said Web

server and passing said group sign up authorization cookie through said Web browser to said Web server,

confirming said passed group sign up authorization cookie has been previously recorded and allowing access to said common resource associated with said group sign up authorization cookie.

13. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein said customized URL is provided to said new user using e-mail.

14. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein the URL is customized and uniquely identifies the user.

15. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein said URL remains valid for a specific time period.

16. A method as claimed in claim 12 including a log in procedure which is part of said step to initiate access to said common resource.

17. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein said common resource is a photosharing resource.

18. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein said web server allows users to establish their own common resource and determine the users who have access thereto by determining what users receive the customized URL.

19. A method of providing controlled access to a common resource to be shared by a plurality of users where said common resource is available on a computer server available on the world wide web, said method comprising an initiating user communicating with said computer server and requesting thereof the creation of a common resource with controlled access administered by said initiating user,

    said initiating user establishing said common resource with said computer server,

recording a group sign up authorization cookie associated with said common resource with said computer server,

creating a customized URL which contains said group sign up authorization cookie,

providing said customized URL to said initiating user for distribution to new users of his choice,

said initiating user providing said customized URL to new users,

said new users using a Web browser and said customized URL to initiate access to said common resource provided on said computer server and passing said group sign up authorization cookie through said Web browser to said computer server,

said computer server confirming said passed group sign up authorization cookie has been previously recorded and allowing access to said common resource associated with said group sign up authorization cookie.

20. A method as claimed in claim 19 wherein said initiating user can establish different access privileges to different users or groups of users by establishing different URL's.

21. A method as claimed in claim 17 wherein each user to access said common resource additionally completes a sign in procedure including the entry of a password.